



# THE TRANSFORMATION FROM THE MONOPRINT ART TO THE GRAPHIC DESIGN IN VIET NAM IN THE ERA OF INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION

Nguyen Quang Huy

Faculty of Graphic Design, The Viet Nam National University of Arts Education

## ABSTRACT

In the early years of the 21st century, with the advantages of global cultural exchange and acculturation, Viet Nam's monoprint arts has undergone major changes, tending to expand in scope and scale of art themes and size with the unique print materials. Along with the training of monoprint, graphic design training services have also become a contemporary aesthetic trend, which brought about a positive signal and inspiration for the Vietnamese Art. Through exercises and creative works of open graphics observed in national and international exhibitions, camps and workshops, the application of monoprints in graphic design training has proven to be model of new artistic language. In this context, the applied graphic arts is widely recognized as fresh changes in artistic training and composition in general, particularly the graphic design subject in Viet Nam's art universities and colleges.

**KEYWORDS:** Graphics, Monoprints, Training, Composition

## INTRODUCTION

### DEFINITION OF THE MONOPRINTS

Printed paintings is regarded as the visual art that belongs to the field of visual graphics, which is distinguished from the applied graphics. To put it simply, the printed painting is an indirect image creation process.

There is no universal concept for the monoprints. The monoprinting is a one-off art printing technique where the image can only be made once, unlike most of printmaking which allows for multiple originals. The experts suggests that the monoprinting art has become more popular to many people due to its "one-off" nature. The monotype printing technique consists of a combination of on-paper painting process and printing steps. In particular, it is not possible to print any more copies similar to the first printed origin.

### DEFINITION OF THE GRAPHIC DESIGN INDUSTRY

The graphic design refers to one of the specialty of the fine arts, in which the word "graphics" refers to those drawings displayed on a flat surface (made of multi-materials), and the word "design" implies the meaning of constructing, creating something new. So "the graphic design" is the creation of an image or an art work on a certain material surface for the purpose of decoration, beautification which serve specific human needs" (Wikipedia). Meanwhile, other definitions affirm that the graphic design is the process of selection, arrangement of languages, images, and messages and then convert them to monolithic objects that are empowered to communicate and influence the audience.

In the graphic design, the monotype print is realised as a separate expression, where a monoprint work is completely independent and achieves different aesthetic values. Final results vary in the artist's emotion, time, and place of the composition. In terms of shaping techniques, the monoprint will create the "soul" for the works through the randomness and the transformation of color patches along with the mixed background introduced by the printing techniques. The author can objectively control the image density to create the feeling of heaviness, lightness, and introduce the near, far, solid and hollow impressions. The monotype prints make an important contribution in the field of art work creation, applied graphic product design, where the final works will randomly change from the start to the end of its creation process.

The graphic design is a major that has a very wide presence in every corner of the daily life. That being said, the power of expression of the graphic design is diverse and difficult to be listed out whereby the monotype prints have many similarities and are directly related to with applied design. In the teaching process of graphic design students, lecturers and students always encounter difficulties and hesitation in deciding what are the most optimum image prototype and design materials for their applied graphic products. Therefore, integrating the monoprint techniques into the modern graphic design is highly recognised foster significant improvements in the teaching and learning processes. Both lecturers and students are offered with more tricks, that can be applied to many different lessons in the university and in other work environments.

In practice, the majority of monoprinting experience is drawn on from the actual works. For each individual, the related knowledge and skills will be strengthened through the practical activities including their own creativeness, exhibition

activities and study of materials. These factors help personalize monoprint style, including through the graphic elements of dots, color arrays, strokes, tints, colors, dithers, layouts, styles etc. These features contribute to creating highly applied products such as packaging, labels, calendars.

In the period of the 15th-19th centuries, large painting shops in the Western countries often had two main processes of painting and printing works. The painted works were usually produced by using oil paints on canvas and in-paper coloring. Meanwhile, the printed works were made by the principles of wood carving, zinc engraving or stone printing. These two types of art shared common techniques that leaned on drawing skills, shaping, placement of color arrays. Out of the two, the printed paintings successfully met the public demand for information and images through low-cost advertisement pictures and leaflets. With the continuous advancement of technology, the printed paintings are currently regarded as the Graphic Art.

The technological revolution in the printing techniques has greatly influenced the graphic industry. The computer-designed painting art are gradually replacing the hand-crafted works (such as wood-carving). In Viet Nam, the traditional painting styles of the Dong Ho painting village, the Kim Hoang paintings, Hang Trong paintings, Thap Vat paintings, the Sinh village paintings, the Southern position paintings, the Southern glass paintings, the mountainous worshipping paintings, the Goi Vai paintings, the Tonkin worshipping paintings, and the canvas paintings have been gradually lost due to the decreased demand for these painting genres. However, the public demand for the traditional art works is not lost but replaced by the flashy and shiny products.

Around the world, traditional and hand-made paintings in various styles and genres are still favoured by several supporter and art associations. The Fine Arts universities have always offered two faculties of graphics and painting majors for study, not to mention the intense vitality of the Chinese painting art (water and ink painting arts which is referred to as graphics art rather than the painting art).

The irreplaceable values of this painting art rest on the author's unique and individual capacity and style. The modern technology can duplicate the works at 99% rate of accuracy, but it is obviously not considered as equal in value. Even if the printing machine can accurately calculate each color atom sprayed onto the surface of the material to form the product, the graphic art works always have unexpected traces of improvisation. The blurry or sharpened printing techniques will represent different vibes. Each print will have to clearly state the date of printing, the number of copies, and the author's signature before the print will be accepted and promoted.

### 1. The Innovations of Viet Nam's monoprints in the recent years - Viet Nam's monoprinting art undergoes innovative changes in content, materials with diverse printmaking techniques.

It can be affirmed that the trend of continuation, renewal and innovation on the basis of the traditional art has still played a leading role in the artistic creation, especially of the monoprinting graphic images, which reply on the rich printmaking methods to realistically reflect all aspects of the society. At present, artists tend to look for new and challenging art topics, that few of them could think of before, including realistic depictions, portrait paintings, spatial depictions, to describe social issues, human life aspects which aims to repel the bad, encourage the good for the social advancement. The gender issues are

frankly revealed through works under the topics of dreams, reminiscences. The innovative trend of content making and form is increasingly being explored and experimented by artists (including many young artists), who also showing sensitivity to new things, finding new modes of expression as demanding necessity of creativity in the modern society.

The monoprint, unlike other printing methods, the image created is only made once. This allows for more unique creations, but with more flexibility, as you can use a combination of monoprinting techniques including printing, drawing, and painting. Based on the characteristics of this printing technique, we can simply understand: the monoprinting art is a printmaking method to create an image by smearing, stamping, brushing, and painting/oil paints applied on an impermeable surface such as glass, mica, metal, plastic, rubber etc. Technically, the monoprint methods apply "drawing" techniques to create a painting - that is, using similar drawing techniques and principles - however in its nature, the monoprinting art is categorised in the printing sector, not in the painting sector. The materials used in the monoprints is rich and diverse in the kinds and can be considered unlimited in quantity. They can be universal pigments, specialized printing ink, oil paints or water-based colors such as watercolor, acrylic, natural colors extracted from plants and minerals, etc. Especially, the printmaking platforms including waterproof surfaces such as glass or mica (most common and most suitable for the manual printing techniques), nylon, metal, plastic, rubber, flat stretched meshes....can be applied depending on whether negative or positive printing methods are desired.

This creative paintmaking technique can make use of the existing methods and available materials to create images. It can even use dotted lines to create shapes which can be erased on the inked printmaking molds. The monoprint techniques can create special effects by flaking, lightly dotting with solvents to dissolve the ink to create a beautiful trail, and by overlaying colors on the top of the master surface, scraping with a knife and brush in usual style or using printed materials such as fabric, leaves, sponges, etc. Basically, the above example techniques are divided into two main methods: color-applying techniques and color wiping techniques, making the printout covered with a thin layer of ink, then the image will be created by removing unnecessary ink with brush, rag, stick or any other tool. It is also possible to combine both methods in one print.

The direct printmaking method can bring about very eye-catching effects through real objects, which is realised a quite useful method in the applied graphic design to print on packaging materials, or create a surface of spatial layers.

The printmaking techniques in the flattened printing and indirect printing is also special indeed, the materials used are quite simple Mika, oil-based ink, Rulo, oil... Besides, for the transfer method, part of it is the application of machine technology. participating printing, all of these materials are easy to find, easy to find and easy to replace. Unlike other types of paintings, this printing method has quick and simple preparation, the print is cleaned and cut to print size, the paper is soaked in moisture, the print object is a photocopy or black and white laser printing. In the flatbed printing process, using the sequence of steps from wetting the surface of the paper, using arabique eraser on the print, rolling the ink, removing the ink to put the paper and printing, the manual printing process results in the picture completely. Relying on the accuracy while performing the steps with this method gives us the result that the printed product is exactly with the outline. In contrast to the flatbed printing, the indirect printing can surprise when using rollers to roll ink on printed objects to transfer images from printed objects to soft roller surfaces, using rollers to print directly on paper, with this method. The printed products create random images beyond the printer's expectations, it depends on the roller, the amount of ink... These are two simple methods of single-copy printing that are easy to practice and also create many works of art. With natural elements, aesthetic value beyond the author's intention, for the application design industry, these are two methods to bring product objects into the design fastest, most realistic and without loss. take the artistic element, the aesthetic element.

## 2. Some famous painters

The Artist Le Huy Tiep is well-known in Viet Nam's modern fine art for his monoprint artworks created by creative explorations through the experimental content of romantic realism, which is rich in philosophy. His zinc-etching artworks showcase the successes associated with his name. That being said, Tiep's new discoveries in the monoprint techniques are unimaginable results originated from his hard work spirit and long-term artistic experimentation through the usage of different materials, techniques and methods - direct or indirect printmaking, which eventually brought about different emotions in each of his artwork. The artwork "The seven dried squids" allows the viewers to feel the ingenuity in form, the image of the squid is faithfully reproduced on the work or the monoprint artwork "Marine environment" (2001, State Awarded in 2007) shows a true reflection, where the viewers clearly feel the message of current marine environment life, reproducing space with artistic images.



Photo: The artwork "The seven dried squids", Artist Le Huy Tiep

The Artist Le Huy Tiep has dedicated his life to the art through his creativeness and exploration to produce many unique visual artworks. The objects in his paintings, the works associated with his memories became closer and friendly, and subsequently created multiple emotions for art lovers, imposed influence on other artists. The Viet nam's modern art has always given him an important position for his contributions.

The Artist Le Thi Thanh is known to with the artwork "Rescue" (below) which was produced by the monoprint and smesh printing methods and received the Viet Nam Fine Art Award in 2019. The award suggests a recognition of the monoprints in the public by highlighting the ingenuity in the layout, ambiguous regardless of space, printing methods, overlapping techniques are carefully calculated, viewers cannot find the printing layer before the next printing layer. The painting has successfully encouraged the viewers's enjoyment through a strong message "let's join hands to protect the environment"



Photo: The artwork "Rescue", Artist Le Thi Thanh

The Monoprint Art Exhibition, namely "the Feelings in June" with the themes of still objects and landscapes has demonstrated both strange and familiar looking appearance for each artwork through random breakthroughs. It is self-explanatory in the artwork "Flower of Meditation" by the Artist Vu Mai Tho, who used a combination of many techniques and applied color layers to create the depth, spatial richness and the color for the artwork. The painting engaged its audience in a quiet ambiguity of the space, bringing the viewer to a meditative world.

Remarkably, the artwork "the Night garden", composed by the Artist Le Thi Thu Dung, has taken her audience far beyond the reality of vision, the balance of Yin and Yang to create harmony in the human life. The beauty of people and life is



exalted by the light and darkness, the day and night exist past and present, the picture shows the intense life of trees in the darkness. Vu Mai Tho described the scene on the picture with tight layouts, wide space. The author wanted to accurately record the beauty of things that attract viewers, but more than that, the author wants to send dreams with visual sophistication, thereby bringing viewers to feel immersed in the work.

The exhibition has engaged the public viewers to enjoy the displayed artworks through various romantic emotions, such as the artwork "Friends", by the Artist Tran Thi Doanh", the beauty of "the Night Garden" by the Artist Le Thi Thu Dung, or quietly through Vu Mai Tho's "Flower of Meditation". Each of the artwork has enhanced the feelings of emotional value of life, a new approach to the monoprint art, contributing to the success of a modern printmaking method.

### 3. The importance of the monoprint in the academic training of the graphic design major

Initially, Viet Nam's fine arts universities were established to meet the public demand of fine arts (such as Indochina Fine Arts College) or handicrafts (such as Dong Nai Fine Arts College, Hanoi Fine Arts College, currently as the University of Industrial Fine Arts). The industrial design in general and the graphic design in particular have been considered a new academic training compared to other training disciplines.

In the recent years, the graphic design major of the Viet Nam National University of Arts Education has encountered challenges in developing basic curriculum due to lack of the teaching experience, compared to other facilities that have taught this discipline for decades. In this situation, the basic issues of art such as dots, arrays, strokes, colors, colors... in which graphic elements are discussed and studied is extremely necessary. Through discussions, research, synthesis, the school's graphic department has raised the key issues of monolithic printing. These are very remarkable achievements when we are at the stage, paving the way for a new major.

During the first semesters of the graphic design training program in the Viet Nam National University of Arts Education, the lecturers provided the training sessions on the monoprint techniques in its curriculum including dots - arrays - strokes; stylized strokes; woodcarving; plaster carving; design illustrations for comics, fine art, ect. In the advanced modules of the graphics program, the application of monoprint method reveal an issue that needs to continue to be supplemented with in-depth research on each topic. The applications of monoprinting methods in the subjects are an important foundation for the development of designs in the new era.

Built from the diversity of the graphic arts majors, the design lessons are arranged in a sequence from simple, basic level to complex combination with high artistic thinking. In some lessons, the monoprinting skills is an important factor to learn and practice. Some monoprint applications in the graphic design training are as follows:

- "Expression of lines, arrays with color" in the design composition.  
To enhance expressive skills, students must create a composition that has texture, layers, and even vibes. The process of doing the test has provided students with more refined and sensitive feelings about images and feelings. In many lessons, students have read and recognized many methods and techniques for organizing shapes and strokes. Students develop the ability to view composition with a broad view, inductively expressing many forms of physical expression. These unique printouts are skills that will be applied in future Stamp Design, Calendar Design, Packaging...

Expression of strokes, arrays, and colors when creating a certain feeling or feeling means that there will be a form of strokes, arrays, and colors that have the opposite emotional value. In order to do this, students can show their lessons in many ways through direct or indirect forms of printing, creating different surfaces, different feelings in an exercise that can be realized. see the joy of the colors, the calmness of the figure.

It can be said that strokes, arrays, and colors are the typical language in single-print paintings, which conventions the shape of things and the surrounding space on the plane. The separation of one object from another in space within the bounds surrounding the figure, thereby giving us different expressions through the eyes. Students who want to create beautiful prints or decorative images must first place strokes, arrays, and colors in the right places, determine the main elements, which arrays are considered main and minor arrays, and how to use them. used as an application design document.



Exercise: "Expressions of Strokes, Arrays with Color", Students, Viet Nam National University of Arts Education

In order to apply monoprint techniques, both teachers and students must master related skills and be proactive in layout process, and arrange layers of images to create space. From there, give a plan to print strokes, arrays, and colors in advance so that there is enough concentration, harmony, and strong enough contrast to make an impression.

- Applied in product packaging application design

The socio-economic researches suggested a high demand for beautiful, suitable and convenient packaging design which will attract and create sympathy for consumers. With today's consumer psychology, they will prioritise spending more money on the products with high quality and reliable packaging design. This is a factor for designers to express their creative abilities through more beautiful and highly applicable products. For the applied arts in product packaging design, compliance with form and material formats, production technology that meets the characteristics of goods and products is a must. Therefore, the use of images on the surface is essential in which the unique print has a stronger, clearer interaction, concretizing the aesthetic of the product.



Photo: Nguyen Thi Quynh Trang, Student, Viet Nam National University of Arts Education used the monoprint artwork of the Artist Nguyen Duc Lan in packaging design.

To create images that can be used for the packaging design in indirect printing and flattened printing are necessary, the characteristic element of the applied graphic design is the exploitation of dots and strokes with shapes, image condensed the application of direct printing from the product to the user, the customer gets attention through the random array of strokes and aesthetic values (pictures for example). This method has certain disadvantages for the products. The printed product is not too large and the product has an angular shape. To solve the problem of packaging products with complex objects, flattened printing can be done, this is the most realistic way to transfer images as well as large-sized sketches to the surface of the packaging, envelope. Indirect printing is also a quite useful method in packaging design. Using this printing method, we

can get the image of the product quickly, directly when printing the object to make a strong impression. With the above three printing methods, they all aim at an aesthetic value that contributes to the design of quality product packaging, in parallel with functional and aesthetic criteria.

- Applied in the design of posters / posters application

For the purpose of communication, promotion or advertisement, the monoprint can also play a part in the way of expression, besides, the information given to viewers through the text and the images is extremely clear and easy to read, understand, easy to remember.

For the monoprint artwork, colors, lines, and rhythms are highly symbolic, creating a strong impression and quick absorption for the viewers. Furthermore, the cues in the print alone create an aesthetic call to action from the viewer. And each printed picture clearly shows the destination, the goal is clear. Therefore, compared to other images, the monolithic prints are very typical.

In addition to the exclusive print competition to show propaganda, promotion and advertising for political activities such as campaigning for parliamentary elections, deputies, etc., it also serves commercial business in all fields. Through participating in advertising with images for exhibition halls, a performance night or a new movie, etc. To products and services for businesses and companies.



Photo: Nguyen Thi Quynh Trang, Student, Viet Nam National University of Arts Education applied the monoprints of the artist Nguyen Duc Lan in poster design

The exploration in the expression of unique prints has changed markedly, with the presence of technology, which has contributed to the richness of posters / posters in Vietnam. It is also the result of the acculturation that has given a unique art form, exploiting the shape and expression of the attractive and impressive ancient art when it contains elements of traditional folk art. That is the feature that makes the artistic value of the Vietnamese engraving genre in the national art scene.

- Applied in calendar design

For calendar design, in addition to the usage of images, drawings as design materials, the designer can deploy the techniques of indirect and flattened printmaking, which help refreshes creative ideas. The products printed by the printer actively change the color so that it is reasonable with the calendar design product. Thus, the application of monoprinting in calendar design gives us many new elements, opening up many options for designers to design printed objects to become central, condensed, and harmonious.



Photo: Student, Viet Nam National University of Arts Education applied the monoprints of the artist Nguyen Duc Lan in calendar design

- Applied in the design of postage stamps

Initially just a means of paying for freight, but when put into use, postage stamps also serve the needs of people for information exchange and emotional exchange, always bringing unique images of culture and nature. As a national identity, postage stamps are also a work of art, promoting the image of the country and its people. With the technology era 5.0 Postage stamps carrying many meanings and values of culture, history and art with different forms of expression.

In order to have beautiful stamp sets with high artistic value, the Vietnam Post Company has set strict requirements, and the combination of creative talents of Fine Arts painters and students of art schools. The art of creating diverse and rich new designs, especially the idea of a form of expression, in which monolithic printing is a form that is well studied by many artists and students of art schools.

Being aware of the important roles and significance of the cultural exchange, students of the fine art schools in Viet Nam have received training on postage stamps through the topics of culture, architecture, etc. The strength taking this thematic art to the next level is not only a postage stamp that performs the payment function, but also a complete work.

In the design of postage stamps, as rich as the subject matter is, Vietnamese painters and students have also found artistic ways to express the same diverse content. But here, metal engraving, woodblock printing, mesh printing, from hand-drawing... With the help of technology, exclusive printing has produced works that are fully applied in terms of lines and colors., arrays, these stamps have brought very rich emotions to viewers.

In order to do so, graphic students in Vietnam must understand the regulations of the Vietnam Stamp Company, under the direction of the Ministry of Information and Communications and the Vietnam Post Corporation to use the content, The theme is suitable for single-print printing, showing the pride of Vietnamese painting that has contributed to the process of world integration, bringing Vietnamese culture to the world with stamps.

## CONCLUSION :

The modern monoprinting arts has played a key position in applying to the graphic design industry in the innovation era.

It can be affirmed that the monoprint are very interested by Vietnamese and international artists, especially in the modern applied design today. The inclusion

of monoprints in the training curriculum in the fine art schools is essential. It is no coincidence that we have seminars, discussions, creative camps or individual and collective exhibitions about the Monoprint. This is fundamental to resonate the applied and aesthetic values with the public and consumers and it also confirms the need for meaningful monoprinting techniques in the process of innovation and development of art and applied art. Especially, in the training of the graphic design to create application products, the introduction and application of exclusive printing is essential, opening up many new directions for learners and new designs. .

As a lecturer of the Graphic Design faculty, we are aware of the importance of the monoprints, which formed the knowledge through previous artists in different environment, that created motivation to contribute as a part of applied knowledge in design lessons.

#### REFERENCES

1. Hoang Minh Phuc (2015), Vietnam modern woodblock prints, World Publishing House, Hanoi.
2. Nguyen Nghia Phuong (2015), Faculty of Graphics conducts training in association with social needs and modernizes education through diversification, Fine Arts Studies, No.4
3. Nguyen Nghia Phuong (2016), The change of subject matter in Vietnamese printmaking art in the early 21st century, Fine Arts Research magazine, No. 02, p.68.
4. Nguyen Tran (1995), Graphic Arts, Fine Arts Publishing House, Hanoi.
5. Nguyen Duy Lam ; \_ Special Promotion ( 2001 ), Color and method of color drawing, Culture and Information Publishing House.
6. The University of Education, University of Education Publishing House ( 2008 ), Textbook of Fine Arts, Publishing House.
7. Vuong Hoang Luc, Principles of black and white painting, Fine Arts Publishing House.
8. Dang Bich Ngan (editor) (2012), Dictionary, popular fine arts terms, Education Publishing House.
9. Nguyen Nghia Duyen (1991); Graphics Textbook; Vietnam University of Fine Arts.
10. Vietnam Woodblock Painting (1998), Fine Arts Publishing House, Hanoi.